

Promising Practices for Goal Three: Student Achievement and Citizenship

All students will leave grades 4, 8 and 12 having demonstrated competency in challenging subject matter...and every school in America will ensure that all students will be prepared for responsible citizenship... and productive employment in our Nation's modern economy.

For Goal Three, the National Education Goals Panel focused on the percentage of public school fourth graders who meet the Panel's performance standard in reading. This standard is set at the two highest levels of achievement on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).

Colorado was one of the states with the greatest reading improvement. The percentage of public school fourth graders who met the Panel's standard in reading rose from 25 percent in 1992 to 34 percent in 1998.

- In 1996, the legislature passed the Colorado Basic Literacy Act, which requires districts to monitor student reading performance in kindergarten through third grade. All students must be prepared to meet Colorado's Fourth-Grade Reading Standards and Benchmarks.
- The Colorado Basic Literacy Act also requires each school to develop Individual Literacy Plans for students not reading proficiently at the third-grade level. Schools must then report to the state how many students are on these plans.

Maryland also showed significant improvement in fourth-grade reading. The percentage of students who read at the proficient level (or higher) rose from 24 percent in 1992 to 29 percent in 1998.

- Maryland modeled its assessment on the NAEP.
- Teacher training is a key component of the state's reading improvement. The Center for Reading Excellence – a partnership among the Maryland State Department of Education, the Kennedy Krieger Institute and Johns Hopkins University – focuses on professional development and serves as a research center.
- The state won a \$14.2 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education this summer under the new Reading Excellence Act. The grant will be used to improve the reading performance of pre-kindergartners through third graders living in poverty.

Connecticut raised its reading test scores across the board and among all racial groups.

- The state assesses student reading in grades 4, 6 and 8 and publicly reports the results. Extra resources are given to needy districts to improve their scores.
- Quality teaching is actively supported through a high salary schedule and professional support.
- Students whose reading development is delayed are identified early on and are given intense support.

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